

**MINUTES  
of the  
FIRST MEETING  
of the  
INDIAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

**June 15, 2015  
Room 322, State Capitol  
Santa Fe**

The first meeting of the Indian Affairs Committee (IAC) for the 2015 interim was called to order at 10:12 a.m. by Senator John Pinto, co-chair, on Monday, June 15, 2015, in Room 322 at the State Capitol in Santa Fe.

**Present**

Sen. John Pinto, Co-Chair  
Rep. Sharon Clahchischilliage, Co-Chair  
Sen. Ted Barela  
Rep. D. Wonda Johnson  
Rep. James Roger Madalena  
Sen. Richard C. Martinez  
Sen. Cliff R. Pirtle  
Sen. Nancy Rodriguez  
Rep. James E. Smith  
Sen. William P. Soules

**Absent**

Rep. Zachary J. Cook  
Rep. Yvette Herrell  
Rep. Georgene Louis  
Sen. John C. Ryan  
Sen. Benny Shendo, Jr.

**Advisory Members**

Rep. Eliseo Lee Alcon  
Rep. Patricia A. Lundstrom  
Sen. Cisco McSorley  
Rep. Debbie A. Rodella  
Rep. Patricia Roybal Caballero  
Rep. Nick L. Salazar  
Sen. Clemente Sanchez

Sen. Carlos R. Cisneros  
Sen. Stuart Ingle  
Sen. Daniel A. Ivey-Soto  
Sen. George K. Munoz

**Staff**

Peter Kovnat, Staff Attorney, Legislative Council Service (LCS)  
Mark Edwards, Staff Attorney, LCS  
Michelle Jaschke, Researcher, LCS

**Guests**

The guest list is in the meeting file.

## **Handouts**

All handouts and other written testimony are in the meeting file.

## **Monday, June 15**

### **Welcome and Introductions**

Senator Pinto welcomed the committee and members of the audience and asked committee members and guests to introduce themselves. He asked that Representative Clahchischillie, co-chair, chair the remainder of the meeting.

### **Discussion of Focus Areas, Work Plan and Meeting Schedule**

Mr. Kovnat presented a summary of the proposed work plan and meeting schedule for the 2015 interim. He discussed issues of ongoing concern to New Mexico's Native American community and the importance of the committee's outreach efforts during the interim. Mr. Kovnat stood for questions on the details of the work plan and the proposed schedule.

Committee members discussed the work plan and requested that the following items be included: an in-depth examination of the issues surrounding the "plume" at the Navajo Generating Station; a presentation on the status of tribal infrastructure and capital outlay projects; testimony regarding drilling in the Chaco Canyon area and "checkerboard" drilling in the Eastern Navajo area and around other sacred sites; an update on Indian gaming, including the status of the Pueblo of Pojoaque; a discussion of elections issues on tribal lands; an update on uranium contamination issues and power systems on tribal lands; and reports from specific charter schools serving Native Americans, including information on school bus issues on tribal lands. Senator Rodriguez moved to adopt the work plan as amended, and Representative Smith seconded the motion. The motion passed without objection.

Committee members discussed the proposed interim meeting schedule and suggested scheduling to enable interested members to attend a regional transportation conference planned in Taos. The committee agreed to move the Tse Bonito meeting to Gallup. Members agreed to request an extra meeting day to coordinate a joint meeting with the Legislative Health and Human Services Committee. Senator Rodriguez moved to adopt the meeting schedule with the proposed changes, and Senator Martinez seconded the motion. The motion passed without objection.

### **Indian Affairs Department (IAD): Programs and Priorities**

Secretary of Indian Affairs Kelly Zunie and IAD General Counsel Moses Winston presented information on the enabling legislation for the IAD and the Tribal Liaison Program. Secretary Zunie described the department as the coordinating agency for intergovernmental and interagency programs concerning tribal governments and the state. She reported that the department is revamping its web site to improve communications and provide up-to-date information on agency programs and projects. The department is bringing on two additional staff members, according to the secretary, at which point the IAD will be fully staffed. She further

reported that the department is making a concerted effort to ensure that capital outlay and tribal infrastructure project funds are spent responsibly and in a timely manner. Secretary Zunie stated that Mr. Winston is serving as general counsel to the IAD and as its legislative liaison and will be in attendance at all of the IAC meetings.

Mr. Winston elaborated on some of the duties of state agency tribal liaisons and observed that all executive agencies have a tribal liaison but that other agencies are not necessarily represented by a liaison. The Higher Education Department and the Tourism Department are in the process of hiring liaisons. In response to questions from the committee, Mr. Winston observed that the primary focus of the IAD in its coordinating and advocacy roles is to represent the interests of the executive branch.

Committee members expressed their concern about delays in executing capital outlay and tribal infrastructure projects through the IAD. They impressed upon Secretary Zunie their expectation that these projects be able to move forward more quickly in the future and that the interests of tribes be represented as well as the interests of the executive. One member suggested that the department may need to request additional funding to carry out its mission, and members encouraged the secretary to meet with individual tribal leaders to better understand tribal issues.

#### **Public Comment**

Joel Davis, representing the Fort Sill Apache Tribe, commented that the Fort Sill Apache Tribe has requested assistance from the department in many areas and that help for the tribe has not been forthcoming in many of those areas. He stated that the tribe would like to work collaboratively with the IAD and receive the same treatment as the other tribes.

#### **Adjournment**

There being no further business before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 12:45 p.m.